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*Histoire de Belgique. Tome III. De la Mort de Charles le Téméraire à l'Arrivée du Duc d'Albe dans les Pays-Bas (1567).*

Par H. PIRENNE, Professeur à l'Université de Gand. (Bruxelles: Henri Lamertin. 1907. Pp. 489.)

IT is not surprising that this volume of his history has cost M. Pirenne more trouble than its two predecessors. For the first portion of it—the reign of Mary and Philip the Fair and the regencies—the author was confronted with the difficulty of few sources; for the latter part he was hampered by the mountain of contemporaneous data that exists and by the mass of opinions that have been expressed, more or less wisely, upon definite conceptions, founded and misfounded, on isolated portions of that data. The result of his labors is a valuable contribution to the knowledge of the subject. His own research is industrious and reliable, his appreciation of others' work discriminating; and his conclusions are sane and convincing. This is especially true of the chapters treating of the period from the death of Charles the Bold to the abdication of Charles V. (1477-1555). Netherland history has suffered seriously from being taken in epochs. The general public has, moreover, been diverted by the readability of certain of our authors and has been satisfied with the impression that the decades illuminated by their pens were the only ones worthy of consideration. Intermediate phases, all-important for due comprehension of the workings, and the outcome of national and bi-national machinery have been left in darkness. No narrative history has been so out of proportion as that of Holland, Belgium and their sister governments. Especially has the eighty years war weighed down the eighty years preceding it so as to throw many of the events of the former totally out of perspective.

Several points are brought out in this volume with trenchant clearness. Among the many loosely written dissertations on the Netherlands and their touch upon political development, no one item has been more often misconceived than the document called the Great Privilege signed by Mary of Burgundy at her accession in 1477. It is continually compared to Magna Carta. As a matter of fact it was a simple affirmation of local self-government. It was a protest against centralization, a "particularist" reaction, essentially petty and hampering to general welfare in its selfish restrictions. Moreover, all that it abolished went into effect promptly, while what it pretended to organize failed to be materialized. The projected Grand-Council never acted and the States-General never convened in accordance with their chartered right. Furthermore, the anxious provisions aimed to protect each political unit really severed *de facto* the bond between the various territories so that the deed practically dissolved into a series of individual privileges and, in so doing, virtually annihilated the few general regulations adopted.

This rating of the Grand Privilege in contra-distinction to its over-

praise is not new but M. Pirenne, himself one of the authorities on the subject, has stated it with great precision here in the natural course of his narrative.

Again, the origin of the States-General is capitably set forth and so is the total absence of any democratic principle at their base. Their earliest convention in 1463 was wholly for the convenience of Philip of Burgundy, a device to save him the trouble of visiting his divers capitals and convening the individual assemblies on their native ground. The constituents were by no means pleased at his invitation to meet their fellows. They objected both to the theory and to the practice. The mileage of the deputies was paid by the towns with many grumbles and remonstrances. They thought their count ought to come to them with his requests for money in accordance with immemorial usage instead of making them pay travelling expenses in addition to their unwilling grants. Yet there is some reason for the respect shown to the mention of the States-General in the Grand Privilege. For the article which secured to this reluctant gathering of local dignities, the right of self-convention was a convenient plank for a later platform. The reactionists of 1477 builded better than they knew. In 1572 the States-General—looking backward for precedent not forward to a bold innovation—seized this disused and neglected article and urged it as a justification for their initial steps of independent federal government when the Netherlands revolted against Spain.

The course of events in the years of the regencies is sketched skilfully with attention to the portraits of Margaret of Austria and Mary of Hungary. The former was an intelligent vicegerent in her nephew's behalf, while the latter was simply a faithful agent to her imperial brother, not venturing on unadvised action. The lieutenancy of both enabled the nobles to become active and important counsellors as they might not have done with a resident sovereign.

It is because M. Pirenne has followed the development of his subject slowly, point to point, instead of starting with the revolt, that he is able, at this stage of his narrative, to give full significance to the part played by the nobles at the accession of Philip II. Charles the Bold did not succeed in breathing a vital spirit into a new nationality. He failed to erect a kingdom called Burgundy but he left Burgundians behind him in the court-circle where he had found Flemings, Hollanders, Brabanters, Burgundian-French. After a century's lapse the descendants of his contemporary nobles were animated by a spirit of cohesion which proved an excellent substitute for love of a concrete *patria* when the unincorporated state of Burgundy slipped out of the control of imperial sovereignty into that of the would-be absolutist, Philip of Spain. It is plain why the revolt of the Netherlands was an aristocratic rather than a popular movement. Another contribution of the fifteenth century helped to maintain this detached upper class nationality. The Order of the Golden Fleece was undoubtedly an element of union among the greater nobles.

The thread of narrative of the political events from 1555 to 1567 is not particularly original but the presentation is fairly vital, far more so that in the more expanded story of M. Gossart. M. Pirenne agrees with the latter in his general opinion that political causes were more potent than religion in bringing about the revolt. The chapters on the social, economic and artistic life are interesting, though rather less so than those upon these topics in the first and second volumes. They touch Belgium as closely as possible, leaving the conditions in the northern Netherlands to Professor Blok's sister history, which, as well as Pirenne's, appears in the series entitled *Geschichte der Europäischen Staaten*.

*Geschichte Spaniens unter den Habsburgern*. Erster Band. *Geschichte Spaniens unter der Regierung Karls I. (V.)*. [*Allgemeine Staatengeschichte*, herausgegeben von K. LAMPRECHT. *Geschichte der Europäischen Staaten*, herausgegeben von A. H. L. HEEREN, F. A. UKERT, W. v. GIESEBRECHT und K. LAMPRECHT, I. 36, I.] Von KONRAD HÄBLER. (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes. 1907. Pp. xvi, 432.)

THIS volume, though edited under new auspices and a different title, is in reality the continuation of the *Geschichte Spaniens* up to 1516, in seven volumes, published by Heeren and Ukert, 1831-1902, and written (vol. I.) by Friedrich Wilhelm Lembke, (vols. II., III.) by Heinrich Schäfer and (vols. IV.-VII.) by Friedrich Wilhelm Schirrmacher. Its author, for some years past one of the librarians of the Königl. Öffentliche Bibliothek in Dresden, is already well known as the writer of upwards of half a dozen monographs on Spanish economic history and bibliography, among the best known of which are *Die Wirtschaftliche Blüte Spaniens im 16<sup>ten</sup> Jahrhundert und ihr Verfall* (Berlin, 1888), and *Die Geschichte der Fugger'schen Handlung in Spanien* (Weimar, 1897).

The present work supplies adequately a long-felt want. The different biographers of Charles V., from Robertson to Armstrong, have laid stress rather on the international aspects of the reign than on domestic affairs, and Spanish historians, in writing of their native land in the sixteenth century, have for the most part, in their patriotic desire to emphasize the more glorious side of their national development, followed the same tendency; with the result that we have not hitherto possessed any satisfactory account of the internal history of Spain under the emperor, save at crises like the Revolt of the Comuneros. Professor Häbler has written his book from precisely the opposite standpoint. He has succeeded in cutting down his account of foreign affairs to less than one quarter of his entire volume; his principal interest is obviously the internal administration of Spain and of her colonies. There is much to applaud and little to criticize.